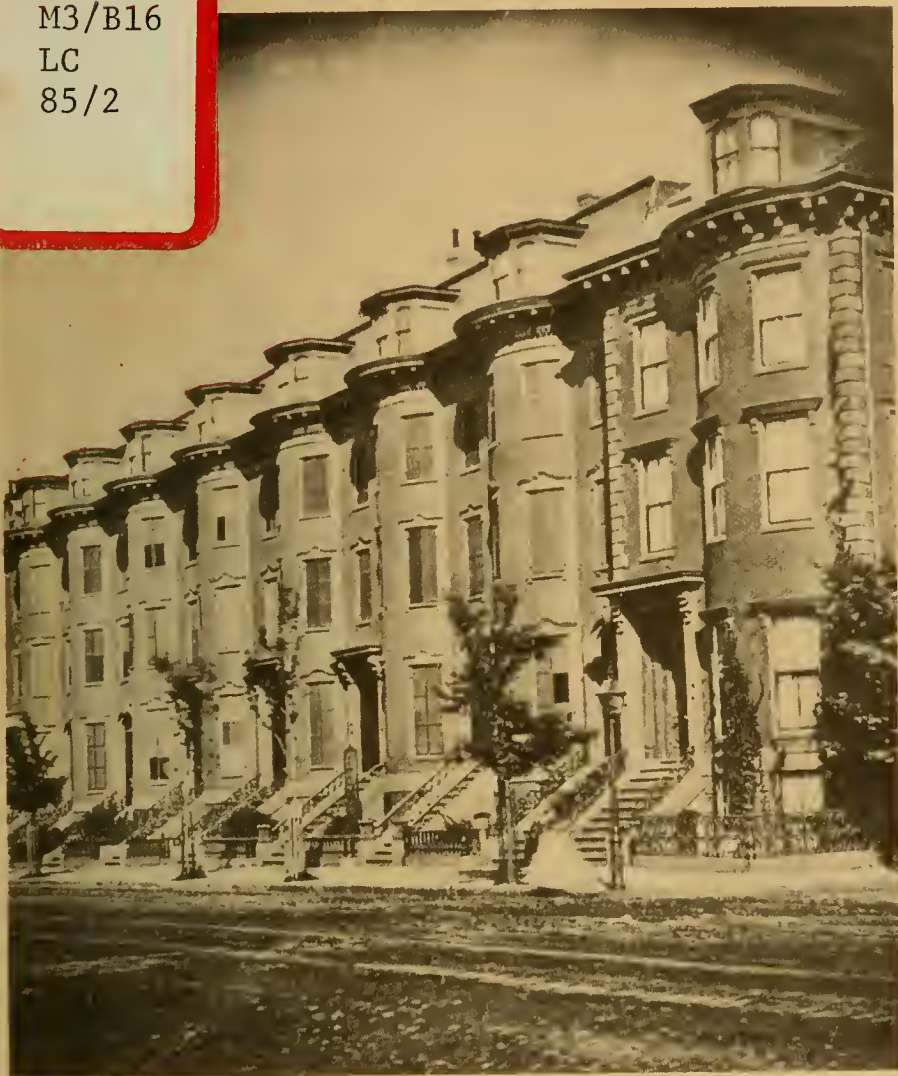


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# SOUTH END LANDMARK DISTRICT STANDARDS AND CRITERIA



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## BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION



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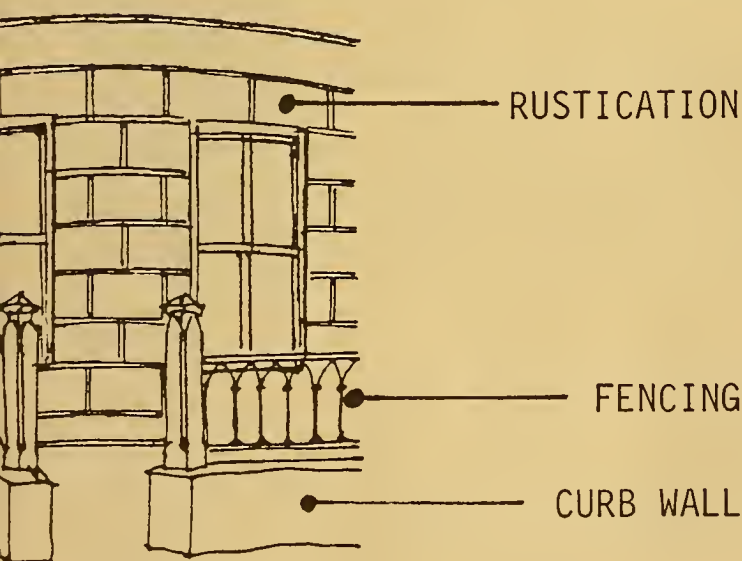
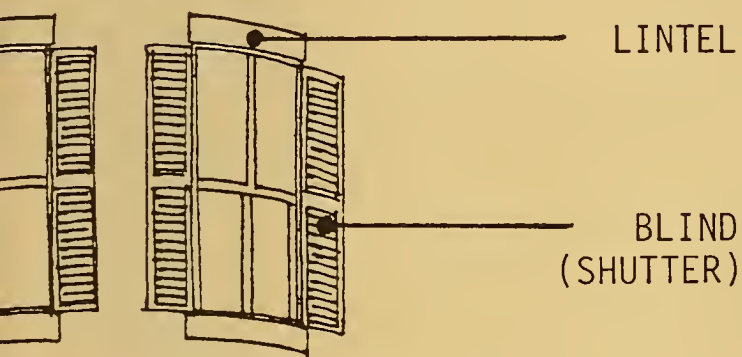
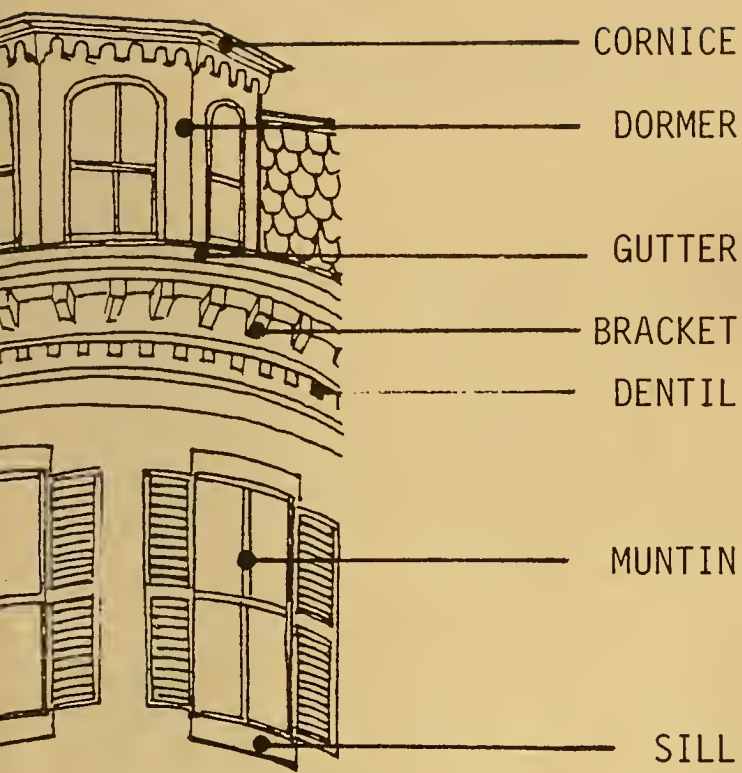


## INTRODUCTION

The statute creating the Boston Landmarks Commission (chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts) requires Standards and Criteria for each district designated by the commission. These Standards and Criteria serve two purposes: one, to guide property owners in planning the rehabilitation of buildings; and two, to assist the district commission in determining those architectural changes that are appropriate to the district. The Standards and Criteria are not retroactive and apply only to changes proposed after the formal designation of the district. They also may not have anticipated every possible change which may be proposed.

The South End was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 as the largest urban Victorian neighborhood in the country, representing over 300 acres of land which was filled along the necklands and developed during the mid-nineteenth century. Substantially intact, the South End was designated a landmark district in 1983.

A landmark district is any area designated by the commission containing any physical features or improvements or both which are of historical, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance to the city and the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation and cause such area to constitute a distinctive area of the city.



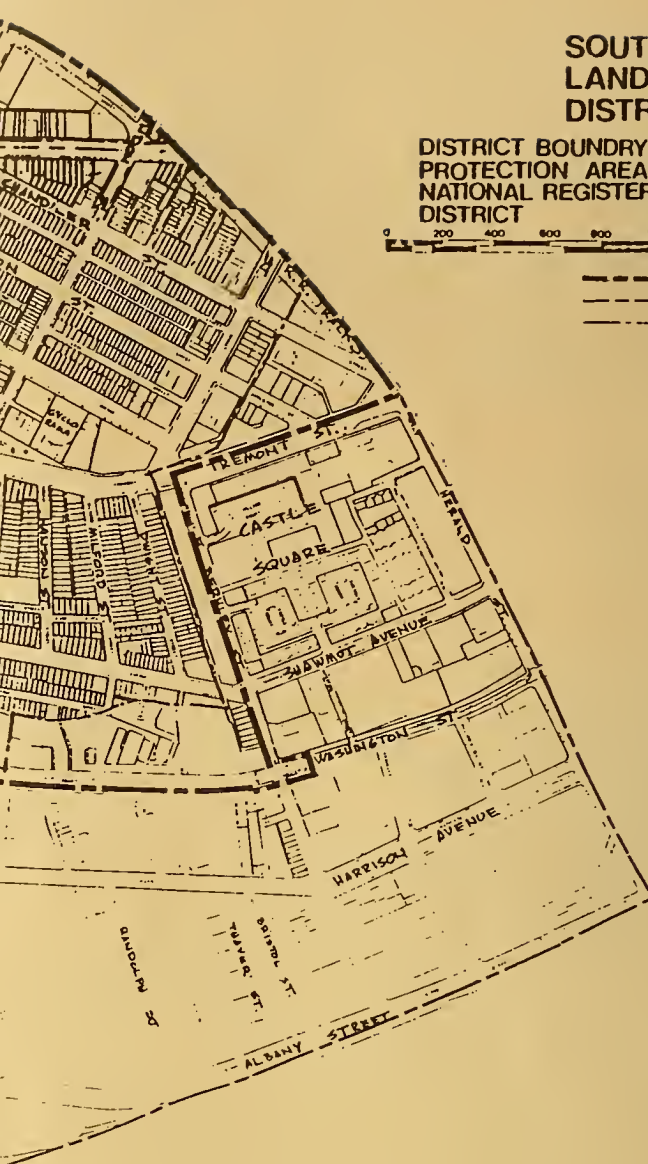


# SOUTH END LANDMARK DISTRICT

DISTRICT BOUNDARY  
PROTECTION AREA  
NATIONAL REGISTER  
DISTRICT



0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200 FEET



For any property located within the boundaries of the landmark district, the commission must approve all exterior alterations (with the exception of those specific exemptions cited in Section N of the Standards). No building permit may be issued for exterior alterations unless accompanied by a certificate from the commission, and all zoning issues must be legalized before architectural review.

Owners contemplating exterior changes to their properties should contact the commission office to file an application for design review. The commission meets once a month in a public hearing to review the applications and issues a certificate of Design Approval when it determines that the proposed work conforms to the Standards and Criteria. In rare instances, such as proven economic hardship, the commission may allow a variance from the Standards and Criteria.

Additional Standards and Criteria for commercial properties and for those within the Protection Area are available from the commission office.

It is generally recommended that deteriorated architectural elements be repaired with new material which duplicates the old as closely as possible. While alterations that intend to create an earlier appearance than that of the building are discouraged, previous changes to a building have often acquired significance and may warrant preservation.

## 2. Wood

Retention and repair of existing walls is preferred. Approval of synthetic siding may be considered provided the original trim and proportions and the arrangement of trim and other elements are not altered or removed. The design and proportion of the synthetic siding should faithfully duplicate the original material, and no grained-surface or vertical siding will be allowed. No new openings in wooden facades will be allowed.

## D. WINDOWS, WINDOW OPENINGS AND TRIM

The original window design and arrangement of window openings on the principal facade shall be retained. Changing window openings to accommodate larger or smaller sash and frame will not be approved. Restoring window openings to the original size where original elements are still visible is encouraged. New openings shall not be allowed.

### 1. Sash and Lights

- a. New window sash should match the original design and should not be divided into a smaller or larger number of panes than original unless documentary evidence of the property under consideration can be supplied to show that the proposed change would be historically accurate.
- b. The retention of original or historic material, such as curved sash, is encouraged. The installation of storm sash (interior or exterior) is preferred to the removal of original sash.
- c. Non-wooden replacement sash may be approved; sandwiched muntins shall not be allowed. Application of panning over original wooden trim is not encouraged. Use of applied wood muntins on thermopane sash is discouraged; however, consideration will be given if such muntins are of an appropriate profile (relative to the construction date and building type) and applied with weatherproof adhesive on both sides of the glass.
- d. The removal of window sash and the installation of permanently fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners is not allowed. (See Exemption #5 in Section N).

### 2. Sills and Lintels

Window sills and lintels shall be retained and repaired. If severely deteriorated, replacements shall be of a material, arrangement, color, and proportion similar to the original in appearance. Replacement sills in brick will not be approved. Decorative lintel details such as applied or incised designs should be retained.

### 3. Window Grilles and Iron Balconies

Ornamental or highly decorative grilles and balconies may be allowed and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. (See Exemption #10 in Section N).

## E. BAYS, ORIELS AND PROTRUSIONS FROM WALL

Bays, oriel, and other similar protrusions from the exterior wall may not be removed. If altered, the design shall approximate the original; new synthetic covering materials will not be approved.

SPECIFIC RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA  
SOUTH END LANDMARK DISTRICT

A. GENERAL

1. The intent of these standards and criteria is to preserve the physical features, architectural character and appearance of the South End, a cohesive district of 19th century Victorian red brick rowhouses with various institutional and commercial structures.

The dominant architectural feature of the South End Landmarks District is the nineteenth century rowhouse block. Houses appear relatively uniform in size, material, and style, the individuality of the unit being subordinated to the harmony of the street. The district is punctuated with occasional buildings of extraordinary architectural form, usually institutional structures such as churches.

2. The standards and criteria are intended to guide the inevitable changes to the exteriors of buildings and physical features within the district to make those changes sensitive to the architectural character of the district and to prevent intrusions. Under these guidelines, no work is required unless initiated by the owner of the property. "Should" as a verb in these guidelines indicates a recommended course of action; "shall" as a verb indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements.
3. The most important feature of buildings are the facades that face the public streets and avenues and the portions of roofs that are visible from public streets and avenues and are therefore the only parts subject to review.
4. All proposed changes or alterations to the elements mentioned in No. 3 above will be reviewed unless specifically exempted; preference will be given to alterations that maintain, preserve, or restore according to the standards and criteria for elements identified below.
5. Rear wall or side walls unless directly facing a public street or avenue (or the side wall at the end of a block of rowhouses) will not be reviewed.
6. When changes to a condominium or other buildings in multiple ownership are proposed, the entire building shall be considered and treated uniformly. Work on any building may, however, proceed in stages.

B. ENTRANCES

1. Steps, Stairs

The original steps, if existing, including stringer, riser, treads and any decorative element, shall be retained and repaired. If such stairs or steps have deteriorated to the degree that they have been removed or require removal, the replacement must appear like the original in massing and must not change location. Brownstone and granite may be replaced with material of similar texture and color such as concrete. Iron or wood stairs shall be replaced with the original material if possible. Enlargement of the doorway under the stoop may be approved but must be reviewed.



## **2. Railings, Balustrades and Decorative Balconies**

Existing cast iron stair railings, balustrades and decorative balconies shall be retained. If they are badly deteriorated or non-existent, replacement elements must be of a size and massiveness consistent with the remaining original elements of the design or consistent with the size, massing, profile and complexity of remaining examples of iron work on nearby buildings. Simplified adaptations may be allowed if they meet the above criteria. (See separate Sections G and H on fire escapes and fences.)

## **3. Entryways**

Entryways (including decorative hoods, canopies, surrounds and mouldings) shall be retained. If entryways are missing or are badly deteriorated, replacement of elements shall approximate the original design, material, proportion, and arrangement.

## **4. Entry Doors And Vestibules**

- a. Original entry doors and visible elements of vestibules shall be retained and repaired. Replacement doors, if required, shall match the original in material and in design, including proportion, number of leaves (i.e., single or double doors), placement within doorframe and general arrangement of panels. Single doors replacing double doors will not be approved.
- b. Transoms, sidelights, and other features shall be retained and repaired and may not be removed or blocked down to fit smaller doors and frames.
- c. Gates or grilles outside or in place of main doors may be allowed and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **C. EXTERIOR WALLS**

### **1. Masonry (brick, stone and concrete)**

- a. Existing walls shall be retained and repaired. Painting of masonry walls will be considered for approval only if the masonry is extremely damaged or the wall is already painted. The proposed color must approximate the original masonry in appearance. Repointing shall match the original mortar in color, texture, joint width and profile. Sand blasting (wet or dry) will not be approved on any masonry or wood surface. Previously used brick (appearing mottled, grayish or whitish, etc.) will not be approved for additional masonry work.
- b. Brownstone may require special treatments involving replacement materials and coatings; each situation will be considered individually based on condition of existing material and proposed situations. The replacement material must approximate brownstone in appearance and texture; the color may be matched by painting or staining.
- c. Covering masonry in another material will not be approved.
- d. No new openings in the wall will be allowed.
- e. Original brick chimneys (and chimney caps and pots) should be retained.

## 2. Wood

Retention and repair of existing walls is preferred. Approval of synthetic siding may be considered provided the original trim and proportions and the arrangement of trim and other elements are not altered or removed. The design and proportion of the synthetic siding should faithfully duplicate the original material, and no grained-surface or vertical siding will be allowed. No new openings in wooden facades will be allowed.

## D. WINDOWS, WINDOW OPENINGS AND TRIM

The original window design and arrangement of window openings on the principal facade shall be retained. Changing window openings to accommodate larger or smaller sash and frame will not be approved. Restoring window openings to the original size where original elements are still visible is encouraged. New openings shall not be allowed.

### 1. Sash and Lights

- a. New window sash should match the original design and should not be divided into a smaller or larger number of panes than original unless documentary evidence of the property under consideration can be supplied to show that the proposed change would be historically accurate.
- b. The retention of original or historic material, such as curved sash, is encouraged. The installation of storm sash (interior or exterior) is preferred to the removal of original sash.
- c. Non-wooden replacement sash may be approved; sandwiched muntins shall not be allowed. Application of panning over original wooden trim is not encouraged. Use of applied wood muntins on thermopane sash is discouraged; however, consideration will be given if such muntins are of an appropriate profile (relative to the construction date and building type) and applied with weatherproof adhesive on both sides of the glass.
- d. The removal of window sash and the installation of permanently fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners is not allowed. (See Exemption #5 in Section N).

### 2. Sills and Lintels

Window sills and lintels shall be retained and repaired. If severely deteriorated, replacements shall be of a material, arrangement, color, and proportion similar to the original in appearance. Replacement sills in brick will not be approved. Decorative lintel details such as applied or incised designs should be retained.

### 3. Window Grilles and Iron Balconies

Ornamental or highly decorative grilles and balconies may be allowed and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. (See Exemption #10 in Section N).

## E. BAYS, ORIELS AND PROTRUSIONS FROM WALL

Bays, oriels, and other similar protrusions from the exterior wall may not be removed. If altered, the design shall approximate the original; new synthetic covering materials will not be approved.



F. ROOFS (including rooflines, cornices and dormers, skylights, greenhouses, penthouses, roof fences and decks, mechanical penthouses, solar panels, and devices, and the like)

1. The original roof configuration and cornice line shall be retained. Additional floors visible from the public streets and avenues may be permissible in special circumstances provided the addition does not interrupt a contiguous row of even cornice lines. Raising or lowering the existing roofline will only be allowed for the purpose of restoring the roof to its original profile. Alterations or new construction such as greenhouses, penthouses, roof decks or fences, solar panels and devices, mechanical and electrical equipment if visible from a public street or avenue may be approved only on a case-by-case basis but in general are discouraged.

Approval criteria shall be:

- a. placement to minimize visibility,
  - b. minimizing visible mass,
  - c. non-reflective dark appearance, and
  - d. conformance to State Building code Requirement, table 302, note 3.
2. Skylights are allowed on roofs, except the front slope of a mansard, provided that the projection is less than one foot above the roof and at least one foot back from the visible edges of the roof; Framing of the skylights should also be dark and non-reflective.
  3. Dormers on mansard roofs shall be retained and repaired or restored. Expansion of existing dormers or adding new dormers may be approved on a case-by-case basis provided designs are based on historic models.
  4. Wood, masonry, and metal cornice elements shall be retained and repaired or restored.
  5. If the visible portion of the roof requires replacement, slate or a non-reflective material similar in color and texture to slate would be allowed. Dark asphalt shingles approximately the original slate color will be allowed.
  6. Gutters, downspouts, flashing, whether new or replacement, must be of a dark, non-reflective material and non-obtrusive in appearance; unfinished metal (other than copper) will not be approved.

G. FENCES AND YARDS

1. Fences

Original front yard fences shall be maintained and repaired or restored. If completely deteriorated or non-existent, replacement by a copy is preferred; an appropriate contemporary design may be acceptable. Chainlink, concrete block, light gauge metal, and wooden picket or lattice fences are inappropriate for front yards.

2. Front Yards

- a. Excavation of front yards below existing grade of front yard will not be approved except for small areaways to accommodate existing windows, ventilation, or for drainage purposes.

- b. Covering of front yards with concrete, asphalt, or similar materials will not be approved. Planting is encouraged.
- c. Construction of storefronts or other ground level projections in the front yard will not be approved.
- d. Excavation for auxiliary entrances may be allowed provided they are based on historic models. They will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **H. FIRE ESCAPES**

New fire escapes on street facades of buildings will be permitted only when required for safety and an alternative egress route is clearly not possible. Fixed diagonal stairways are discouraged. (See Section B.2 for decorative balconies.)

## **I, J, & L. SIGNS AND COMMERCIAL FRONTS**

As noted in the Introduction, these Standards and Criteria are available from the commission office.

## **K. DEMOLITION**

Demolition of entire structures is prohibited except when in the opinion of the commission warranted for extraordinary circumstances. Partial demolition of later additions (such as storefronts) is subject to review on a case-by-case basis.

## **M. ADDITIONS**

Architectural changes that increase the height above existing contextual rooflines, or that substantially alter the profile of the building, will not be allowed unless they are based on documented historical models. Alterations to atypical buildings may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

## **N. EXEMPTIONS FROM REVIEW**

These items are not subject to the review and approval of the District Commission; the following comments are, however, recommended. The commission staff can provide additional information to interested individuals who request it.

1. **COLOR:** It is encouraged that trim and window sash and frames be painted in muted dark tones on Victorian-era structures. Lighter tones are appropriate for the few pre-Victorian and Classical Revival buildings.
2. **SHUTTERS:** When used, shutters should be of a wood louver design. Each shutter should match the height and one half the width of the window opening. It is recommended that the shutters be installed on shutter hardware and be operable or made to appear operable. Shutters should also be black or dark in color.
3. **INTERCOM/ BUZZER DEVICES:** Buzzers and intercom boxes should be inside the vestibule and not mounted onto the brick face of the building. Individualized buzzers are more appropriate than metal panels.
4. **TEMPORARY SIGNS:** Such signs should be installed so that their removal will not scar the face of a building or a fence. Temporary signs should also not obscure significant architectural details.
5. **AIR CONDITIONERS:** Portable, seasonal window air conditioners are exempt from review.
6. **EXTERIOR LIGHTING:** It is encouraged but not required that vestibules and doorways be illuminated. Lighting on the facade was not a part of 19th century South End rowhouse design. Exterior lighting should be generally concealed (e.g., recessed over doors) and should not imitate earlier 18th century styles (i.e., colonial lanterns). Simple contemporary fixtures are a suitable alternative.





MANSARD

ENTABLATURE

SECOND  
FLOOR

HOOD

TRANSOM

FIRST  
FLOOR

PILASTER

RAILING

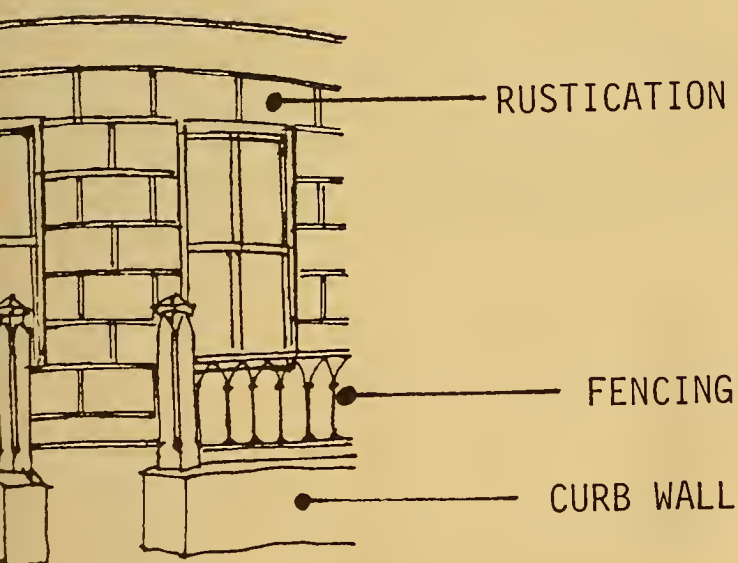
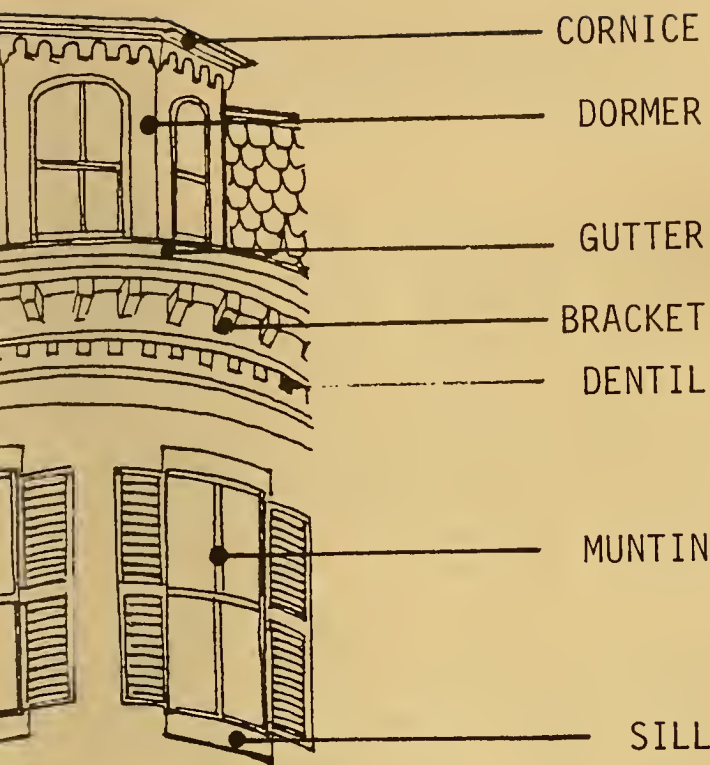
BASEMENT

STOOP

STRINGER

TYPICAL SOUTH END A







**City of Boston  
The Environment  
Department**

Boston City Hall / Room 805  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201